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in Jerusalem, paints the Messiah as a mighty king, the true son of David, who will destroy the rule of the wicked stranger.

What added fuel to this fire was the fact that the oppressors of Israel endeavored to rob the people of their religion. The whole period is one of constant struggle between the religion and culture of Israel, and the religion and culture of Greece. A Hellenistic party then always existed in Palestine and, chiefly through the Sadducees and others, exerted a powerful influence, even in royal and priestly circles. Antiochus IV. went so far as to order all the copies of the Scriptures found in the land to be burned; the Romans set up their eagles and images in Jerusalem, to the horror of all the Jews, who would not allow images to be made. These endeavors of the Gentile conquerors compelled the faithful all the more to cling to the legacy of their fathers, to the law and the other sacred books; hoping that, when the time of persecution should be over, and the people should have been tried as if by fire, then the hour of deliverance would come, and the true Israel, that had not fallen from the high estate of being God's chosen children, would receive their reward in the glorious kingdom to be established by the Messiah.

Such was the fate of the people, and such were the thoughts that filled their souls during these eventful years. In the light of these facts, it is not an historical enigma how the Judaism of Christ's day became such as it was. It is capable of a rational and historical explanation, and is the result of factors at work during the centuries between the two Testaments. Israel's fatal error during this period consisted in this, that the people, instead of following the word of revelation alone, allowed the hopes and fears, the joys and sorrows of the hour to warp their judgment and misinterpret the deeds and words of Jehovah. Consulting flesh and blood, and not the word of truth alone, in matters of faith and doctrine, will, in the nature of the case, ever lead to error more or less fundamental.

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS.

By PROF. WILLIS J. BEECHER, D. D.,

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OCT. 10. JESUS BEFORE PILATE. John XVIII. 28-40.

OCT. 17. JESUS DELIVERED TO BE CRUCIFIED. John XIX. 1-16.

OCT. 24. JESUS CRUCIFIED. John XIX. 17-30.

Who were the Jewish men who secured the death of Jesus? To what extent were their proceedings legal, according to the Jewish usages of the period? How do the usages thus exhibited compare with those described in the Old Testament?

The high-priest Annas, of the gospels, is undoubtedly the same whom Josephus calls Ananus the elder, and perhaps elsewhere Ananias. He was made high-priest by Roman authority, the 37th year after the battle of Actium, say, 7 A. D. (Jos. *Ant.* XVIII. 2, 1). He held the office about fifteen years, and was deposed by Roman authority. After a short time, his successor was deprived of the office in favor of Eleazar, the son of Ananus. Eleazar was high-priest for one year, and his successor for one year, after which Caiaphas became high-priest,

shortly before Pilate became governor, and continued in the office until about the close of Pilate's administration. He was high-priest about eleven or twelve years, to about 37 A. D. His pontificate began not very much earlier or later than the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus (*Jos. Ant.* xviii. 2, 2). After Caiaphas, there were perhaps a dozen successive high-priests, four of whom were four other sons of Ananus (*Jos. Ant.* xviii.-xx.). In his narrative of these later times, Josephus speaks of high-priests as if there were several high-priests at once, constituting a class, and not one high-priest only; his narrative implies that Ananus and many others who had held the office survived to nearly the time of the taking of Jerusalem by Titus; he calls Ananus "the ancientest of the high-priests" (*Jos. Ant.* xx. 8, 8; *Wars*, iv. 3, 7). Annas, his five sons, and his son-in-law Caiaphas held the pontificate, off and on, for more than half the time from the year 7 A. D. to the destruction of Jerusalem. With two short intervals, three members of the family held it consecutively from the time Jesus was eleven or twelve years old till after his death.

The word translated "chief-priests" in the English versions is uniformly the same with that translated "high-priest." It would perhaps be better always to translate it high-priest, leaving the reader to judge for himself, in each case, whether it is used strictly, or as the name of a class. Now it is this class of high-priests, including particularly Annas, Caiaphas, and "the kindred of the high-priest" (if that be the true translation in Acts iv. 6), who appear in the New Testament, first, as carefully watching the proceedings of John the Baptist and Jesus, and afterward, as the leaders in the attempts to destroy Jesus and his disciples. Whoever else may have been included in this body of high-priests, it is certain that Annas and his family connection were the ruling spirits among them. They were men of courage, ability, and political ambition. They had Sadducean affiliations (Acts iv. 1-6); the last high-priest of the family, the younger Ananus, was distinctively a Sadducee (*Jos. Ant.* xx. 9, 1). It was a part of their policy to receive spoils of office from the Romans, in exchange for influence. Such men might well be envious when they saw Jesus actually wielding that influence in the nation which they themselves needed to seem to wield. What if Pilate should take a notion to strike hands with the rising teacher, and appoint some friend of his high-priest, instead of Caiaphas! It was all the worse because Jesus taught steadily the theological system of the Pharisees, and to that extent weakened the influence of the religious heads of the nation, in favor of that of the Pharisees, who were already their too powerful rivals in the esteem of the public.

Associated with the high-priestly party in enmity to Jesus were men who are variously called scribes, elders, and Pharisees; the last of these three terms would include most of the persons who are also denoted by the other two terms. The fact that Jesus taught mainly the same religious and moral doctrine with the scribes rendered them the more displeased that he refused to recognize their traditions as authoritative, and distinctly opposed their attempt to use religion for establishing a mental despotism over men. Through their success as expounders of the law, these men had acquired such an influence that they were courted by both Jews and Gentiles who had anything to seek from the Jewish people. They were the popular leaders of the times. Even those members of the high-priestly party who were opposed to them were obliged to seek alliances among them when they had plans to carry out. The success of Jesus was undermining their influence. He openly opposed many of the practices in regard to the sabbath, the cer-

emonial law, prayer, etc., on which they relied for training the people to habits of obedience to their teachings; he taught all people to receive the Word of God directly, rather than through the medium of the scribes.

Either of these parties would probably have welcomed Jesus with open arms, as an ally against the other. An alliance with either would have made him practically the head of the Jewish race throughout the world, opening before him, had he been so disposed, an almost limitless field for worldly ambition. Up to the crucifixion week itself, the tempter never ceased to show him all the kingdoms of the world, and to say, "All these will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Jesus refused both alliances; he stood in the way of both parties, and affiliated with neither. High in power in both parties were a certain number of unscrupulous men. Opposed, as they were, each to the other, they were willing to combine for the destruction of the man whom they both hated. How extensive the combination was, we have no means of knowing; it is certain that many of the members of the Sanhedrin were either in it, or at least under its influence; but the fact that it had not power enough so that it dared to venture upon the public arrest and open trial of Jesus shows that it was a combination, not of the whole body of the two parties, but of only a few leaders in each party.

The council, the Sanhedrin, the legal body, in which the enemies of Jesus took their action against him, was made up of priests, scribes and elders. Doubtless the Pharisaic scribes and those who held with them had a large majority, in a full meeting, while the leaders of the high-priestly party were pre-eminent in personal influence. That Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea were members of this council is not so directly stated in the gospels as the readers of the English versions would suppose, but is undoubtedly the fact (John III. 1; VII. 50; Mark XV. 43; Luke XXIII. 50, 51). It is as least as probable as the contrary that Gamaliel already held the same enlightened views which he so influentially expressed a few years later (Acts v. 34-39). In view of the fact that Nicodemus, at one consultation of these men, and Gamaliel, in a meeting of the Sanhedrin, had influence enough to break up the proceedings then pending against Jesus or against his disciples, it is evident that the combination against him could not always have their own way, even in the council itself.

There can be no doubt that the gospels represent that a meeting of the council was called, when Jesus was arrested, and that he was subjected to some kind of an examination before it; but was this examination of the nature of a legal accusation, trial and condemnation? In opposition to the substantially unanimous opinion of Christian interpreters, I am constrained, on the evidence, to answer this question in the negative.

Jewish scholars, assuming that the gospels describe a legal trial and condemnation of Jesus, impugn the historical correctness of the gospels, by showing that such a trial as the gospels describe would have been contrary, in many essential points, to Israelitish law as held by the scribes. To have been a legal court, for example, the meeting should have been held in the *gazit*, and not in the high-priest's house; it should have been presided over, at that time, by Gamaliel, and not by the high-priest; the vote should have been taken man by man, beginning with the youngest, and not by acclamation; the trial could not have been had in the night; the sentence of guilt could not have been pronounced until the day following the trial, nor the execution have taken place earlier than the day after the sentence. For other like points, with references to authorities, see McClintock

and Strong's *Cyclopædia*, or other current books of reference. Christian scholars meet these objections by explaining the law differently, in some cases, or by asserting that perhaps some of the precepts found in the rabbinical writings were not in existence in the time of Jesus, or by urging certain passages which make an exception of the case where a man is tried for pretending to be the Messiah. Perhaps these answers to the objections might be sufficient, if the gospels anywhere affirmed that Jesus was subjected to legal trial under Jewish law; but in the absence of any such affirmation, it is more natural to understand that the evangelists intended something different from a legal trial. They describe what actually took place, and it is something not at all like the idea of a legal trial, as that idea existed, so far as we can ascertain, in the minds of the men who had Jesus in their power. It is true that they were men in official place, and could have put him upon trial, had they been disposed; but it does not follow that they actually did put him on trial. It is true that more or fewer of the men who would have formed the court for trial were got together, and that some sort of a hearing was had before them, but it does not follow that this hearing was other than preliminary and informal. Before Pilate, they urge, among other things, that Jesus has broken Jewish law; but they do not urge that they have tried him and found him guilty of breaking the law; on the contrary, they refuse Pilate's suggestion that they should take Jesus and judge him according to their law. To judge him according to their law was to acquit him, and they must have known it. Perhaps they themselves, amid the solemnities of a court of justice, would not have ventured to vote for his conviction, and they could still less depend upon their colleagues. Rather than risk the results of a deliberate trial and an orderly verdict, they preferred to break up the meeting of the council, with the outcry that he was worthy of death, and then to depend upon persuading or browbeating or fooling Pilate into committing the judicial murder which they themselves shrank from committing.

In all these matters, we catch glimpses of an order of administration in affairs, based, indeed, upon the Mosaic legislation, but radically different, in many respects, from anything observable in the Old Testament. Probably no one ever thought of these differences as proving that the Pentateuch was not yet in existence. We should be rather shy of arguments based on similar differences for disproving the existence of the Pentateuch at certain earlier periods. We should be yet more shy of the assertions as to the cast-iron changelessness of the Jewish laws and of the interpretation of them, now so recklessly made in so many quarters.

In John XIX. 24 is a literal citation of Ps. XXII. 19, which needs no comment. In XIX. 28 is the formula "that the Scripture might be fulfilled," with what is commonly supposed to be an allusion to Ps. LXIX. 22.

OCT. 31. JESUS RISEN. John XX. 1-18.

NOV. 7. THOMAS CONVINCED. John XX. 19-31.

Is the doctrine of the resurrection taught in the Old Testament? Certainly it is not taught prominently and centrally, as it is in the New. But throughout the Old Testament books, there are isolated passages, some of which seem to imply the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead, and others distinctly to express it. There is a considerable amount of this kind of matter, as one would see, if he should collect all the passages. The question is one of interpretation. Are we to infer the absence of the doctrine from the general silence of the Old Testament

in regard to it, and then to infer that the passages which, on their face, seem to teach it, must therefore be otherwise understood? Or are we to infer that the doctrine was known in the Old Testament times, but that there was some reason for keeping it in the background in the Scriptures of those times? If this latter alternative is feasible, there is no difficulty in our understanding in their most natural sense the Old Testament passages that seem to refer to a future life. I have only to state the question, not to argue it. But any one who thinks it to be historically true that Israel was in close contact with Egypt, for some centuries before the publication of the Mosaic laws, will hardly doubt that in the times of Moses the doctrines of a future state, a resurrection, and future retribution must have been familiarly known to Israelites, and must have been either accepted or deliberately rejected; and one who holds thus will hardly, in the entire absence of positive proof, accept the latter of the two alternatives.

A BOOK-STUDY: ISAIAH XL.-LXVI.

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I. GENERAL REMARKS.

1. It is assumed that the student has become familiar with the general aim and method of these book-studies from those upon the Books of Samuel. Most of the general remarks prefixed to the preceding studies are applicable to this.

2. As the purpose of these studies is original knowledge at first hand, the student is earnestly advised not to consult any commentary or other work of reference until he has well advanced in both the analytical and synthetical study of the book.

3. In no part of the Bible does the superiority of the Revised Version over the old version appear more conspicuously than in Isaiah. No one ought to think of using the old version except for comparison. Students who understand Hebrew will yet find the Revised English Version best for such work as this. The use of the original is mainly valuable in the special study of minutiae.

4. After a fair amount of original study be sure to read chapters XIII.-XV. in volume VI. of *Geikie's Hours with the Bible*. Other works which may be consulted are: *Encyclopædia Britannica* and Schaff-Herzog *Encyclopædia*, articles Cyrus, Babylon, etc.; *Stanley's Lectures on the Jewish Church*, lectures XLII. and XLIII.; *Rawlinson's Oriental Monarchies*, the Fifth Monarchy, chap. VII. Among commentaries those of *Delitzsch*, *Nägelsbach* (*Lange* series), and *Cheyne* may be recommended to the professional student. For the general student the *Speakers' Commentary* (called also the *Bible Commentary*).

5. The Book of Isaiah contains sixty-six chapters. The prophetic discourses are divided into two sections by the insertion of four historical chapters (XXXVI.-XXXIX.). The chapters (XL.-LXVI.) following this division constitute one distinct and continuous discourse, and may be studied as one complete whole.

6. The question of the *unity of the authorship* of the earlier and later prophecies attributed to Isaiah is one of high interest; but it is not possible to do more than throw a few side-lights upon it in the present study.